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ABSTRACT

During fall 1987, the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC) designed and initiated a 5-year statewide longitudinal study to identify variables affecting student progress toward personal, academic, and career objectives. An initial survey of 181 randomly selected first-time, first-year students was designed to provide a profile of community college students in the state and identify their educational and career goals. Follow-up surveys were scheduled at 6-month intervals, beginning in spring 1988, to evaluate students' progress toward their goals. Based on responses from 85% of the original sample, findings from the first follow-up study included the following: (1) 93% of the students were enrolled in the same college in which they were enrolled in fall 1987, and 77% planned to continue their studies there; (2) respondents had a mean grade point average of 3.02, and enrolled for an average of 15 credit hours; (3) 84% reported no major life changes within the last 6 months affecting their future educational or career plans; (4) 36% of the students who had left college after one semester gave academic reasons for leaving; and (5) a large majority of the respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the instruction, faculty/student relations, grading, variety of courses, counseling/academic advising, financial aids services, student employment services, friendship with students, and facilities and equipment at the college. The survey instrument is appended. (EJV)

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STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL STUDY

WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE COMMISSION

Interim Report

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1988

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STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL STUDY

First Interim Report

During the fall of 1987, the Wyoming Community College Commission designed and implemented a five-year statewide longitudinal study. The purpose of the study is to identify the variables that affect student progress toward personal, academic and career objectives. The initial survey was designed to define a profile of community college students and identify their educational and career goals. The original sample consisted of one-hundred-eighty-one (181) randomly selected first-time, first-year students attending one of the seven community colleges in Wyoming.

To evaluate students' progress in reaching their objectives, follow-up surveys are scheduled at six-month intervals during the five year study period. The first follow-up survey was completed after six months or during the spring of 1988. The survey elicited responses in four categories: Current Educational Status; Future Educational and Career Plans; Plans for Fall, 1988; and, Satisfaction with College Experiences. The findings recorded from the one-hundred-fifty four (154) students or eighty-five percent (85%) of the original sample are listed below.

CURRENT EDUCATIONAL STATUS:

1) Are you currently enrolled in the same community college in which you were enrolled last semester, fall 1987?

Yes	93%
No	7%

2) If you answered "yes," what was your grade point average last semester?

Mean grade point average reported: 3.02

3) If you answered "yes," how many credits are you taking this semester?

Mean credit hours enrolled: 15

4) If you answered "no," what was your grade point average last semester?

Mean grade point average reported: 2.63

5) If you answered "no," why did you leave the community college after one semester?

Academic Reasons	36%
Financial Reasons	18%
Mission for Church	18%
Health Reasons	18%
Completed Certificate	9%

6) If you answered "no," are you enrolled at another college, university, or educational institution?

Yes	9%
No	91%

7) If you answered "yes," on question #6, where are you enrolled?

Out-of State

8) If you are not enrolled in an educational institution, which of the following best describes your current status?

Working in a full-time career position.	18%
Caring for a home and/or family.	18%
Serving in the military.	9%
Working while deciding on future plans.	9%
Taking time off while deciding on future plans.	9%
Traveling.	0%
Other, please describe. (Mission for my church)	18%
No response.	18%

9) Do you plan to re-enroll in a college, university or educational institution in the foreseeable future?

Yes	82%
No	9%
No response	9%

10) If you answered "yes," when do you anticipate re-enrolling?

Fall, 1988	33%
Fall, 1990	22%
Don't Know	44%

11) If you answered "yes," at what institution do you plan to re-enroll?

Same Community College	33%
A Different Community College	22%
University of Wyoming	22%
Don't Know	22%

FUTURE EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER PLANS:

1) Have there been any major changes in your life in the last six months that have affected your future educational or career plans?

Yes	16%
No	84%

2) If you answered "yes," please describe the changes:

Changed educational/career goal	24%
Changed marital/family status	20%
Financial problems	16%
Transferring to another school	12%
Health problems	12%
Changed living arrangements	4%
Delayed educational plans	4%
Took permanent job	4%
Never going to junior college again	4%

3) In the last six months, have you made any major changes in your future education or career plans?

Yes	30%
No	70%

4) If you answered "yes," please describe the changes:

Changed educational major	50%
Changed transfer plans	17%
Not returning to school	17%
Married and changed plans	4%
Joined military	2%
No response	9%

PLANS FOR FALL, 1988:

1) Which of the following best describes your plans for fall, 1988?

I plan to continue my studies at the community college in which I am currently enrolled.	77%
I plan to transfer to another college or university.	9%
I plan to begin my working career.	5%
I plan to work for awhile before deciding on future plans.	3%
I plan to take time off before deciding on future plans.	1%
I plan to take care of my home and family.	1%
I plan to enter the military.	0%
I have other plans. Please describe. (Two will be on missions for their church, one was undecided and two did not respond)	5%

2) If you plan to transfer to another college or university, what is the name and location of the institution?

In-State		36%
	Central	(1)
	University of Wyoming	(4)

Out-State		64%
	Arizona State University	(2)
	Augustana College, SD	(1)
	Chadron State, NE	(1)
	Fort Hays State, KS	(1)
	Lamar University, TX	(1)
	University of Arizona	(1)
	University Maine,Fort Kent	(1)
	U.C.—Riverside, CA	(1)

3) If you plan to begin your working career, in what career will you be working?

Word Processing	(1)
Dental Assisting	(1)
Practical Nursing	(1)
Security or Guide	(1)
No Response	(1)

SATISFACTION WITH COLLEGE EXPERIENCES:

1) How satisfied are (were) you with your college experiences since you enrolled in the fall, 1987

	not satisfied	satisfied	very satisfied
Instruction	3%	28%	69%
Faculty/Student Relations	2%	29%	69%
Grading	5%	34%	61%
Variety of Courses	12%	37%	51%
Counseling/Academic Advising	19%	30%	51%
Financial Aids Services	16%	35%	49%
Student Employment Services	11%	41%	48%
Friendship with Students	6%	24%	70%
Facilities and Equipment	3%	29%	68%

2) Do you have suggestions for improvement to the community college?

Yes 36%

CC	44%
CWC	56%
EWC	31%
LCCC	36%
NWC	23%
SC	50%
WWC	38%

No 64%

Suggested Improvements

"Need to improve student parking."
"Make Casper College into four-year school."
"More input from students would improve quality of education."
"Make it (Casper) a four-year college."
"Less time on Christmas vacation would be nice. The extra time would prove to be beneficial."
"In law enforcement area, classes are too limited."
"Offer some second semester classes first semester."
"Better communication. Passed composition class through AP testing. Told it didn't count when it did--poor advising."
"Summer session is terribly overlapped."
"Newer equipment for the truck driving course."
"Casper College to a four-year school. More activities or ways to meet students."
"Better knowledge of how to help student transfer to another college."
"More teachers, equipment updated, Career Office Studies not accelerated."
"More student involvement (goals) by faculty."
"Job placement needs awareness of needs of single mothers."
"More activities at earlier time of day."
"School too small, students unfriendly, transferring credits difficult, on rodeo team--barn is embarrassment, advisor does not help."
"Auto Mechanic program should have more advanced classes, maybe two-year program. Instructor is excellent. He could teach higher level classes."
"More activities, parking and dorm roads in poor condition, cafeteria and grounds need keeper, housing manager poor."
"Need evaluations at end of each semester on instructor. Student input important in planning for the next year."
"New men's dormitory supervisor."
"Could put stamps on envelope if want back early."
"Student center--TV room, non-alcoholic bar, dance hall, etc."
"Teachers should get papers back sooner and put more constructive criticism on them."

"Dorms done equally both floors. Instructors need to explain assignments more clearly. How about a stamp?"
"Instruction needs more communication and understanding with students. Need good communication with each other."
"Computer courses--demand is great, not enough courses and computers as well as not enough time actually spent learning to use."
"Regarding policies, activities and opportunities--line between those who know and those who don't. We need a bridge."
"If LCCC could widen the variety of courses, it would be an absolutely fantastic institution."
"Advisors more available at registration. Team teachers should coordinate efforts."
"I think that there should be more awareness in clubs at the school."
"More activities geared to the younger students."
"Study class recommended for all new students who have been out of school for awhile."
"There needs to be more education courses offered and more teachers for them."
"Better library resources."
"A greater variety of times when classes are offered."
"Have more programs for student loan or financial aid."
"There is one thing I would like to change. Instead of living two semesters in the dorm, I feel one semester is enough."
"It needs more involvement in religious events."
"Improvement in food variety. Water needs adjustment in dormitories."
"I think it would be nice in the future to have a swim team or a swimming pool."
"More variety of classes in electives."
"After first semester should be able to move off campus without filling out a petition.'
"I've had good luck with teacher attentiveness but some of my friends have not had teachers teaching what was in the syllabus."
"Have instructors who encourage, not discourage students in the math courses."
"Changes need to be made for the married students with families. A more tailored course."
"All instructors in all departments should use the same grading scale."
"An indoor and/or outdoor riding/roping/equestrian center."
"Art department too general. Didn't let you work in your area. Instructors too defensive. Classes were repeat of junior and senior high."
"Offer more courses, especially French."
"Donated funds to help students and improve facilities not used for board room and president's office, kick-backs to contractors. More student input."
"Smoking area for study, eating, some classes offered more than once, more offered in summers."
"Teachers continue to teach even after bad student evaluations. Not enough teachers in some areas so not enough course variety."
"Financial situation at WWC."
"Advisors need to be better informed about student needs and transfer guides. Independent study labs need explained to first year students."

GRAPHIC SUMMARY OF KEY QUESTIONS

and

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG VARIABLES

FIGURE 1

CURRENT EDUCATIONAL STATUS AND FALL GRADE POINT AVERAGE

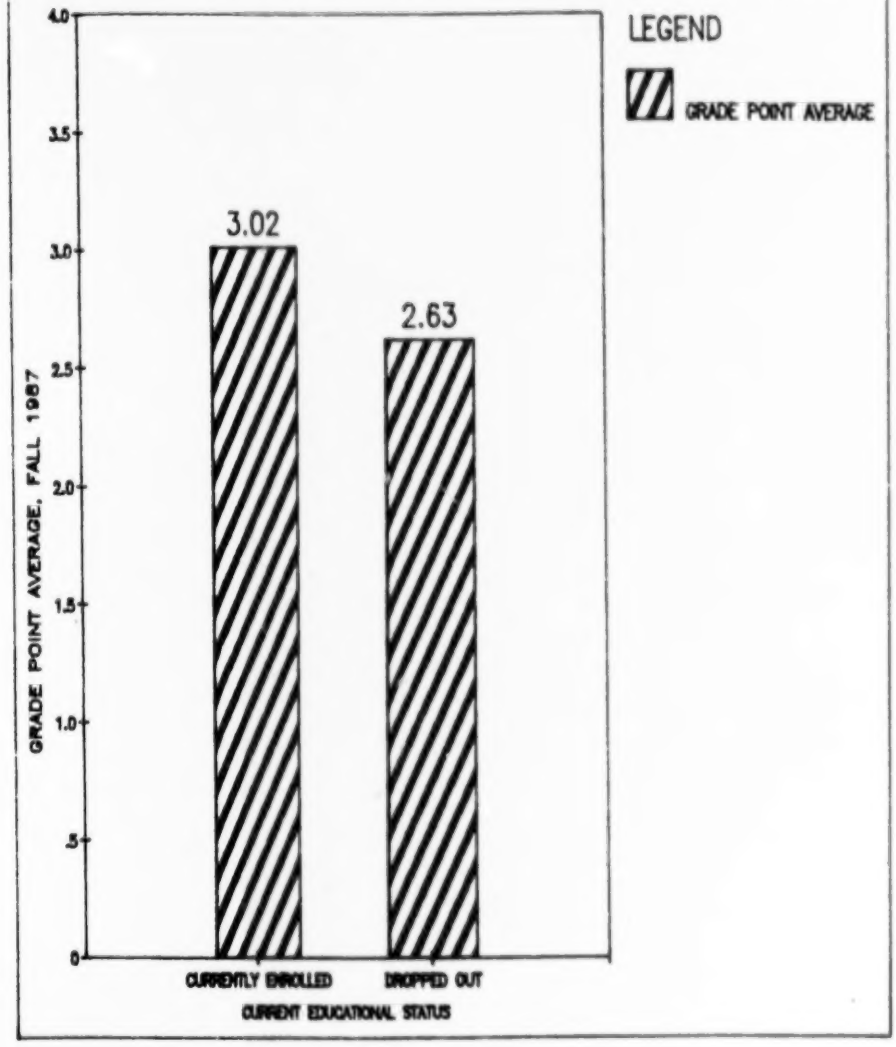
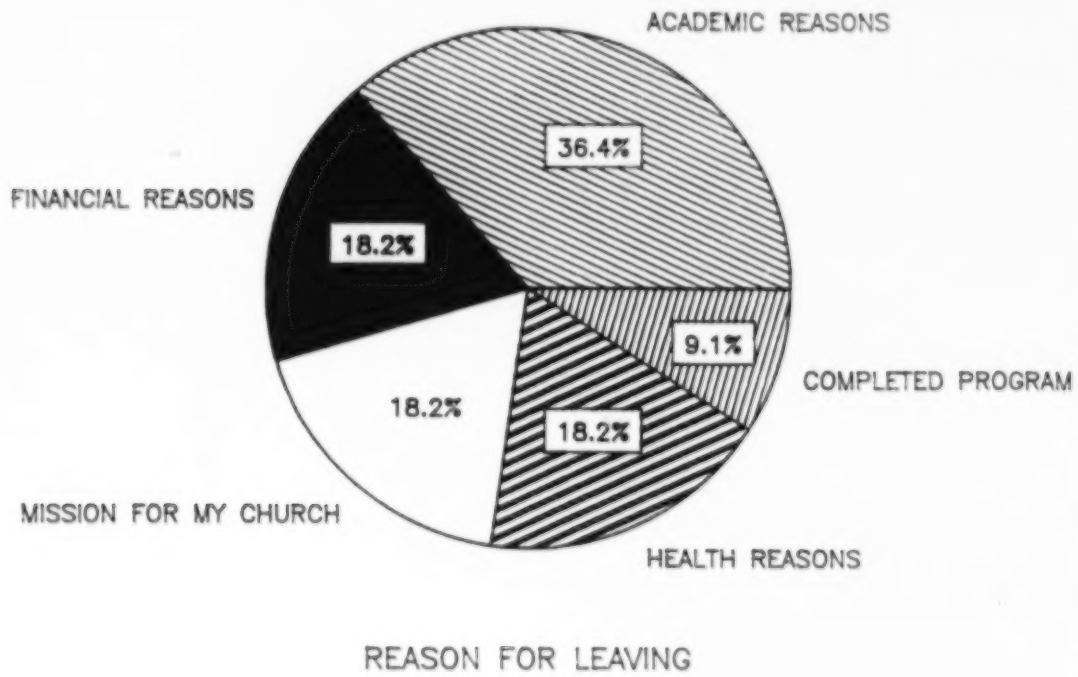


FIGURE 2

REASONS FOR LEAVING COLLEGE AFTER ONE SEMESTER



REASON FOR LEAVING

FIGURE 3

PLANS FOR FALL, 1988

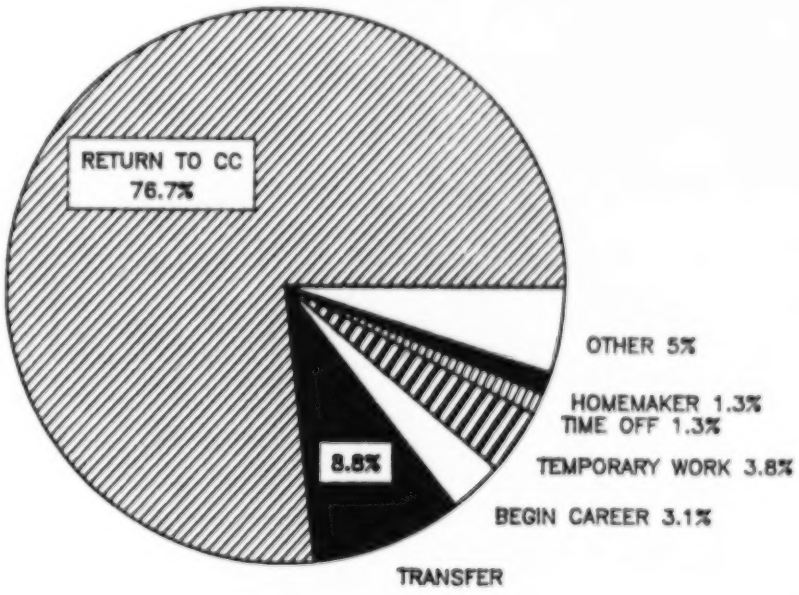


FIGURE 4

MAJOR CHANGES TO EDUCATION OR CAREER PLANS

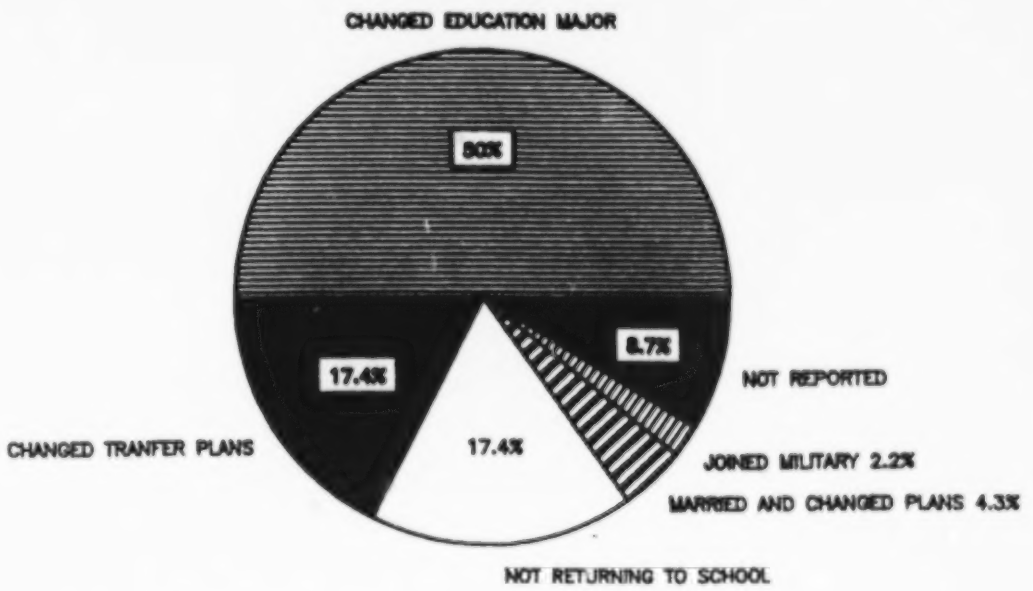


FIGURE 5

SATISFACTION WITH COLLEGE EXPERIENCES

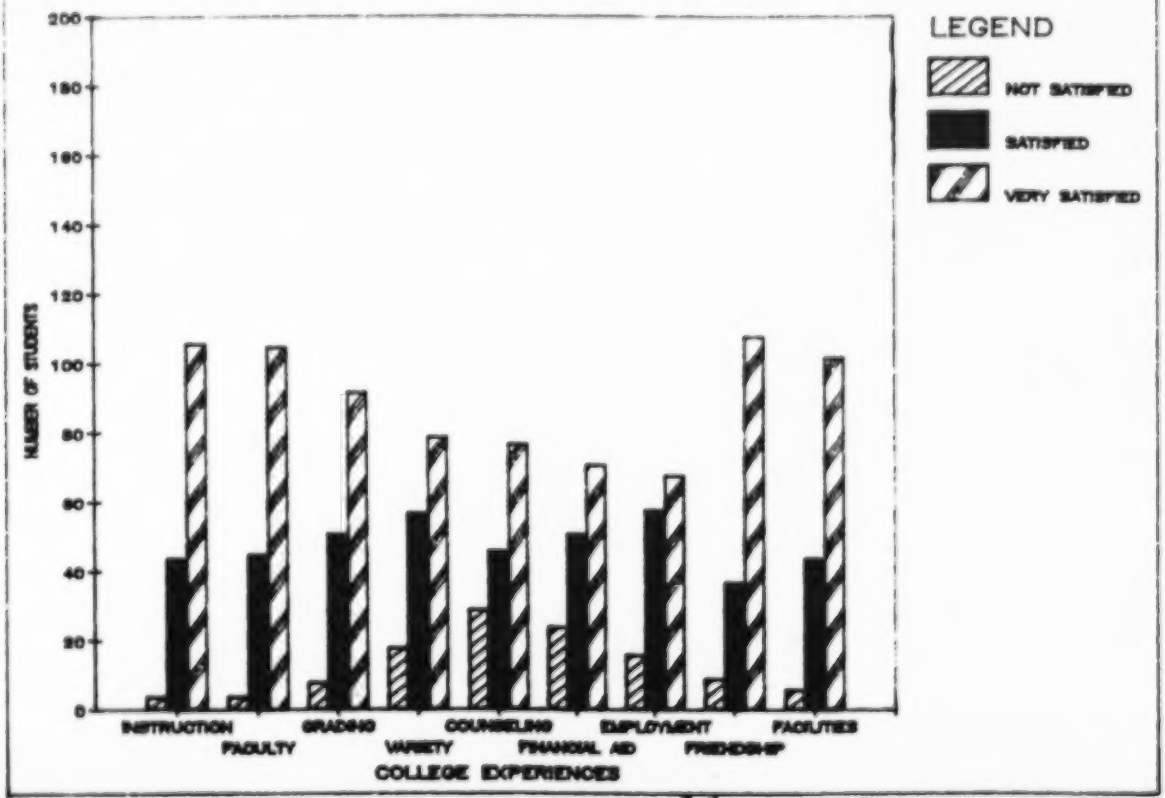


FIGURE 6

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GPA AND SATISFACTION WITH INSTRUCTION

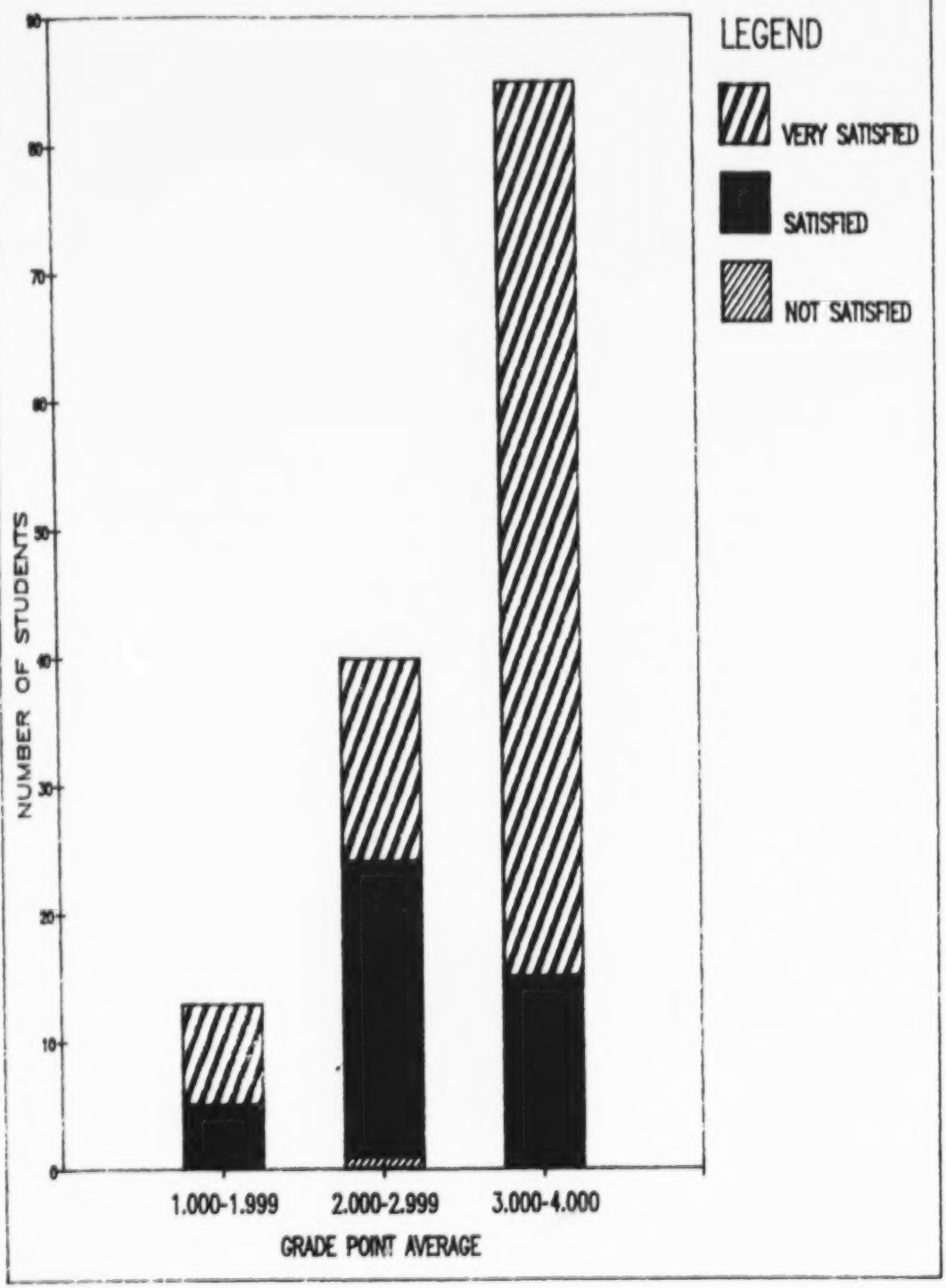
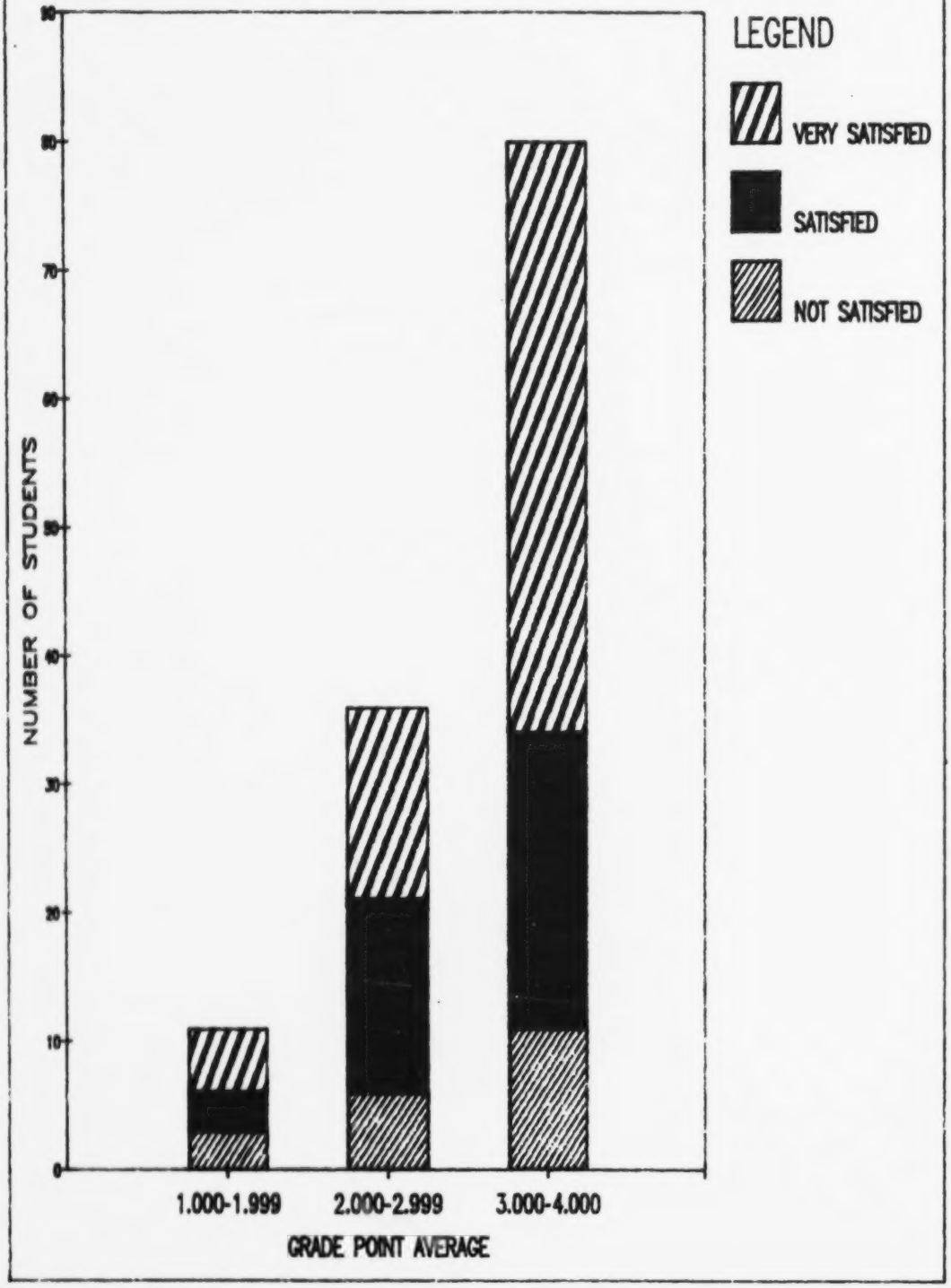


FIGURE 7

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GPA AND SATISFACTION WITH COUNSELING



WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE COMMISSION

STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL STUDY

SPRING 1988, STUDENT FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

DIRECTIONS: Please answer each of the following questions as accurately, honestly, and completely as you can. It is important to provide as much information as possible.

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION:

1) Name _____ SS# _____
(last) (first) (M.I.)

2) What is your current mailing address and telephone number?

_____
_____
_____
_____

CURRENT EDUCATIONAL STATUS:

3) Are you currently enrolled in the same community college in which you were enrolled last semester, fall 1987?

_____ Yes. If "yes," what was your GPA last semester? _____

for how many credit hours are you currently enrolled? _____

(IF "YES," SKIP TO QUESTION #8)

_____ NO. If "no," what was your GPA last semester? _____

4) In your own words, why did you leave the community college after one semester? _____
_____.

5) Are you enrolled in another college, university, or educational institution?

_____ Yes. If "yes," what is the name and location of your current educational institution?

_____.

(IF "YES," SKIP TO QUESTION #8)

_____ No.

6) If you are not enrolled in an educational institution, which of the following best describes your current status? (Check one)

_____ Working in a full-time career position.
_____ Caring for a home and/or family.
_____ Serving in the military.
_____ Working while deciding on future plans.
_____ Taking time off while deciding on future plans.
_____ Traveling.
_____ Other, please describe _____.

7) Do you plan to re-enroll in a college, university, or other educational institution in the foreseeable future?

_____ Yes. If "yes," when do you anticipate re-enrolling?
_____

If "yes," in what institution?
_____

_____ No.

FUTURE EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER PLANS:

8) Have there been any major changes in your life in the last six months that have affected your future educational or career plans?

_____ Yes. If "yes," please describe _____
_____.

_____ No.

9) In the last six months, have you made any major changes in your future education or career plans?

_____ Yes. If "yes," please describe _____
_____.

PLANS FOR FALL, 1988:

10) Which of the following best describes your plans for fall, 1988? (Check only one)

_____ I plan to continue my studies at the community college in which I am currently enrolled.
_____ I plan to transfer to another college or university. Name and location _____ _____.
_____ I plan to begin my working career. Planned career and job title _____.
_____ I plan to work for awhile before deciding on future plans.
_____ I plan to take time off before deciding on future plans.
_____ I plan to take care of my home and family.
_____ I plan to enter the military.
_____ I have other plans. Please describe _____
_____.

SATISFACTION WITH COLLEGE EXPERIENCES:

11) How satisfied are (were) you with your college experiences since you enrolled in the fall, 1987? (Circle one number for each category

	not satisfied		satisfied		very satisfied
Instruction	1	2	3	4	5
Faculty/Student Relations	1	2	3	4	5
Grading	1	2	3	4	5
Variety of Courses I could Take	1	2	3	4	5
Counseling/Academic Advising	1	2	3	4	5
Financial Aids Services	1	2	3	4	5
Student Employment Services	1	2	3	4	5
Friendship With Other Students	1	2	3	4	5
Facilities and Equipment	1	2	3	4	5

12) Do you have suggestions for improvement to the community college?

_____

_____

_____.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSES

ALL INFORMATION WILL BE KEEP CONFIDENTIAL

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges
OCT 14 1988